

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 04902 301553Z

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ACTION ARA-08

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8870

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 4902

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, CO

SUBJECT: GOC SUGGESTS TRADE TALKS

FOR ARA/ASST SEC ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR

1. DURING TEXTILE SIGNING CEREMONY, MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT RAMIREZ OCAMPO PULLED ME ASIDE AND SAID THAT NOW THAT THE TEXTILE TALKS HAD CONCLUDED HE WANTED VERY MUCH TO FOCUS ON THE TRADE ACT AND IPE MEANING FOR COLOMBIA. THE MINISTER SAID THAT HIS EXPERTS HAD CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ACT, AND POTENTIAL FOR EXPORTS, ONE BY ONE, UNDER PREFERENCES OR OTHERWISE, BUT THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL THEY WERE UNSURE OF IN TERMS OF INTERPRETATIONS OF THE LAW AND THE CONSEQUENT PROSPECTS FOR COLOMBIA'S TRADE WITH US. HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO HAVE SOME CONSULTATIONS IN WHICH THESE THINGS COULD BE EXAMINED, PARTICULARLY IN ITS TECHNICAL ASPECTS.

2. I SUGGESTED THAT SUCH CONSULTATIONS MIGHT EVEN BE EXPANDED TO EXAMINE BROADER TRADE ITEMS, SUCH AS MTN, INTERNATIONAL RULER OF THE GAME ON THINGS LIKE EXPORT SUBSIDIES, ETC. MINISTER WAS ENTHUSIASTIC AND SAID THAT THIS KIND OF CONSULTATION WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL AND WELCOME.

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PAGE 02 BOGOTA 04902 301553Z

3. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT MINISTER'S SUGGESTION FITS IN

VERY WELL TO THE DEVELOPING TACTICS OF STRENGTHENING CERTAIN BILATERAL CONTACTS, AND WOULD BE A GOOD PEG ON WHICH TO HANG EVENTUAL ESTABLISHMENT OF SOME KIND OF ON-GOING CONSULTATION OR JOINT COMMISSION, SUCH AS WE PROPOSE TO DO WITH BRAZIL AND VENEZUELA. SINCE THE SUGGESTION WAS A GOC INITIATIVE, WE COULD FOLLOW THROUGH WITHOUT IT APPEARING TO BE FAVORITISM OR OUR SINGLING OUT A COUNTRY, AND AT THE SAME TIME IT WOULD STRENGTHEN OUR BILATERAL STRATEGY WITH AN IMPORTANT LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRY. THE SUBJECT MATTER OF SUCH CONTACTS WOULD BE IMPORTANT, SUBSTANTIVE AND USEFUL IN AND OF THEMSELVES; COLOMBIA CAN BE VERY HELPFUL IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE POLICY DISCUSSIONS; AND THE EXAMPLE OF CONSTRUCTIVE CONSULTATIONS TO SEE HOW BEST TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AND APPLY THE TRADE ACT SHOULD BE SALUTARY FOR THE REST OF LA WITH REGARD TO THIS CONTROVERSIAL ACT. A COMMISSION MIGHT PROVIDE A FORUM FOR COORDINATING OUR TRADE POLICIES IN INTERNATIONAL FORA, AND MIGHT ALSO IN TIME GO ON TO OTHER ITEMS OF MUTUAL INTEREST IN THE ECONOMIC/DEVELOPMENT FIELD. I SHOULD POINT OUT IN THIS CONNECTION THAT AL FISHLOW WAS VERY IMPRESSED WITH THE GOC'S ATTITUDE ON EXPORT PROMOTION AND HE THOUGHT THE GOC MIGHT USEFULLY BE ENCOURAGED TO INFLUENCE OTHER LA'S; HE ALSO WAS IMPRESSED WITH WHAT APPEARS TO BE THE GOC'S FASHIONING OF A NEW MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE BRAZILIAN AND PERUVIAN ONES, WHICH IT WOULD BE IN OUR INTEREST TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT. IN SHORT, A COMMISSION DEVICE WOULD BE A MOST USEFUL WAY TO ENGAGE A MAJOR COUNTRY IN FRUITFUL ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DISCUSSION AND TO HANDLE BILATERAL CONCERNS.

4. I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT I BE AUTHORIZED TO RESPOND TO THE MINISTERS SUGGESTION BY PROPOSING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT CONSULTATIVE GROUP OR COMMISSION TO MEET ON AN ON-GOING BASIS, INITIALLY TO EXAMINE THE TRADE ACT AND ITS IMPACT ON COLOMBIA, SECONDLY THE MTN AND OTHER BROAD TRADE QUESTIONS AND EVENTUALLY FOR WHATEVER OTHER ITEMS COMMEND THEMSELVES TO THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. THIS COULD PERHAPS BE INITIATED BY SENDING TWO OR THREE PERSONS TO BOGOTA FAIRLY QUICKLY TO INITIATE CONSIDERATION OF TRADE ACT IMPACT.

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